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## **Senate Republicans: "Enough said, let's get to work!"**

**LANSING** – “The governor’s fundamental direction is troubling,” said Sen. Patty Birkholz, responding to the 2005 State of the State Address Tuesday night.

While the nation’s economic recovery is well underway, families in Michigan are still facing the prospect of an unemployment check instead of a regular paycheck.

In 2004, Michigan was the only state with a net job loss. Michigan and one other state had the highest unemployment rates in the nation at 7.3 percent in December; nearly two percent above the national unemployment rate.

The governor’s proposal on allowing the state to invest \$2 billion in bond money sends up some major red flags to Senate Republicans. Borrowing money for ongoing operating expenses is not a solution to the problem and could create legal issues.

The GOP vision for Michigan includes providing a job opportunity for anyone who wants to work and support their family. It includes a great education for every student and affordable health care for families and senior citizens.

“It’s not enough to talk about a vision without taking action to make it a reality,” said Senate Majority Leader Ken Sikkema. “We’ve seen what happens when a governor waits two years for things to get better on their own. We’re tired of waiting and the people of Michigan are tired of seeing jobs pour out of this state.”

Birkholz agreed, citing the “New Economy” legislative initiative recently announced by Senate Republican members. The package is focused on improving Michigan’s economy by boosting the state’s high-tech sector.

“We need to continue the opportunities for our life science corridors and increase our educational opportunities,” said Birkholz, R-Saugatuck Township.

While Michigan has made major investments in life sciences over the past four years, the state is not truly reaping the economic benefits of that investment. A 2004 study ranked

Michigan 37<sup>th</sup> in the nation in risk capital and infrastructure, just above states like Wyoming, Kansas, Iowa and Montana, whose economies rely heavily on natural resources.

Unveiled last week, Republicans plan to introduce the legislation in the coming weeks, as well as legislation designed to improve agriculture across the state of Michigan.

Birkholz said some of the governor's proposals outlined in her speech have merit, but she needs to see details, not just general ideas.

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